

House Judiciary Committee
Feb 15, 2007
House Bills 4044 - 4046

Chairman and Representatives of the Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Detroit Regional Chamber, I urge you to oppose House Bills 4044 – 4066. The Chamber is a membership and economic development based organization with over 23,000 members and over 75 local business partners in the ten county Detroit Region.

Several years ago, the State of Michigan recognized some key high cost areas for doing business. Excessive tort costs stood out among the list. To encourage greater business development, growth and attraction, these state officials reduced the excessive torts for which Michigan taxpayers and businesses were paying heavily. Key to those reforms was capping payouts for drug lawsuits which are already covered under federal statute.

In addition to looking out for our members, we also have a strong economic development partnership. This partnership meets regularly with companies across the nation and across the world to bring new business to Michigan. By imposing further costs on businesses and individuals, our state government will send the wrong message for anyone looking to relocate in Michigan.

Our organization represents a variety of business types and sizes. A large section of our membership is comprised of small companies who have become members to save on health care costs. Small businesses and sole proprietors need access to affordable quality care. If the prescription tort reform laws are repealed, this could add astronomical costs to providing health care to Michiganders. But this doesn't just affect our members, it will cost struggling families across Michigan millions of dollars in additional health care costs that they currently cannot afford.

Michigan's tort reform laws have made our state a leader across the country. Many other states are now looking to emulate our laws and reduce their costs. Unlike Michigan, these states are not in a financial or economic crisis, and in fact they are doing quite well. Michigan on the other hand is struggling to keep what we have.

Tort reforms are one of the key building blocks Michigan needs to get back on top of its game. Ann Arbor and the entire state are still reeling the loss of Pfizer. Let's not send more companies, employees and families packing for greener pastures – please oppose House Bills 4044-4046

Thank you,
Melissa Trustman
Senior Director, Government Relations
Detroit Regional Chamber